

REMARKS

Claims 1-39 are currently pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28, 33, 35, and 37 have been amended, claims 2, 5, 6, 15, 25, 32, 34, 36, and 38 have been cancelled, and new claims 40-41 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 3, 4, 7-14, 16-24, 26-31, 33, 35, 37, and 39-41 are at issue. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections in light of the arguments herein.

A. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, the Examiner issued various rejections of claims 1-5, 7-22, 28-33, 36, and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,196,411 to Nava *et al.* ("Nava"). The Examiner also rejected claims 14 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,311,860 to Reidinger *et al.* ("Reidinger"). Applicants have cancelled claims 5, 15, 32, and 36. Applicants submit that the remaining rejected claims are allowable in view of the amendments herein, as described below.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 39 was allowable and that claims 6, 23-27, 34, 35, and 38 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to include all the elements of claim 6, including intervening claims 2 and 5, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 1 is now allowable, as well as dependent claims 3, 4, and 7-13 depending therefrom.

Applicants have amended claim 14 to include the elements of dependent claim 25, including intervening claim 15, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 14 is now allowable, as well as dependent claims 16-24 and 26-27 depending therefrom.

Applicants have amended claim 28 to include the elements of dependent claim 34, including intervening claim 32, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 28 is now allowable, as well as dependent claims 29-31, 33, and 35 depending therefrom.

Applicants have amended claim 37 to include the elements of dependent claim 38, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 37 is now allowable.

Applicants have added new claims 40-41. New claim 40 represents original claim 23 rewritten in independent form, including the limitations of intervening claim 15, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable. New claim 41 represents original claim 24, which the Examiner also indicated would be allowable. Thus, Applicants submit that new claim 40 is allowable, as well as dependent claim 41 depending therefrom.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections and objections and allowance of pending claims 1, 3, 4, 7-14, 16-24, 26-31, 33, 35, 37, and 39-41.

Applicants note that allowable claims 26 and 27 originally depended from claim 25 (now claim 14), and allowable claim 35 originally depended from claim 34 (now claim 28). Thus, it is not necessary to rewrite original claims 26, 27, and 35 in independent form, since doing so would not change their scopes. Similarly, new claim 41 is identical in scope to original claim 24, and thus, it is not necessary to rewrite claim 24 in independent form.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections and objections and allowance of claims 1, 3, 4, 7-14, 16-24, 26-31, 33, 35, 37, and 39-41 in the present Application. Applicants submit that the Application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests an early notice of the same. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney if anything is necessary to further the progress of the present Application.

Please charge any fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-0733.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____



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